

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Final Report
Ohio Child and Family Services Review

The Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) assesses State performance during a specified time period with respect to seven child welfare outcomes in the areas of safety, permanency, and well-being and with respect to seven systemic factors. The Ohio CFSR was conducted the week of May 20, 2002. The assessment is based on information from the following sources:

- The Statewide Assessment prepared by the State child welfare agency – the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), Office for Children and Families;
- The State Data Profile prepared by the Children’s Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services;
- Reviews of 50 cases from three counties in the State; and
- Interviews or focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State-level) with stakeholders including children, parents, foster parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, school personnel, service providers, court personnel, legislators, and attorneys.

A key finding of the CFSR of Ohio’s child welfare programs was that the State did not achieve substantial conformity with any of the seven safety, permanency, or well-being outcomes. In addition, the State did not meet national standards for measures relating to repeat maltreatment, maltreatment of children in foster care, foster care re-entries, stability of foster care placements, the length of time to achieve reunification, or the length of time to achieve adoption.

Although the State did not meet the requirements for substantial conformity with the CFSR Outcomes, the case review process and stakeholder interviews identified several areas of strength, including the following:

- Providing services to families to prevent removal while at the same time ensuring the child's safety (item 3).
- Reducing the risk of harm to children (item 4).
- Establishing appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner (item 7).
- Providing services to children to help them make a successful transition from foster care to independent living (item 10).
- Placing children in foster care in close proximity to their biological families (item 11) and with their siblings (item 12), when in the children's best interest.
- Promoting frequent visitation between children in foster care and their parents and siblings in foster care (item 13) and supporting and maintaining the parent-child relationships of children in foster care (item 16).
- Visiting children in foster care with sufficient frequency to monitor their safety and ensure their well-being (item 19).

One area of concern identified during the CFSR pertained to the agency's lack of consistency in ensuring the well-being of children and families served by ODJFS. For example, Well-Being Outcome 1—Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs—was found to be either "partially achieved" or "not achieved" in 34 percent of the cases reviewed. In these cases, reviewers determined: (1) that the service needs of children, parents, and foster parents had not been adequately assessed or met (item 17); (2) that parents were not engaged in the development of case plans (item 18); and/or (3) that caseworkers did not visit parents with sufficient frequency to ensure the children's safety and to promote attainment of case goals (item 20). Similarly, the CFSR case reviews found that Well-Being Outcome 2—Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs—was either partially achieved or not achieved in 30 percent of the cases.

In addition to concerns identified with respect to child and family well-being outcomes, the CFSR revealed that the agency also is inconsistent in its efforts to achieve permanency for children in foster care. For example, Permanency Outcome 1—Children have permanency and stability in their living situations—was found to be either partially achieved or not achieved in approximately 27 percent of the cases reviewed. Both case review findings and stakeholder interviews targeted the following indicators related to permanency as areas needing improvement:

- The rate of re-entry into foster care (item 5).
- The stability of children's placements while in foster care (item 6).
- That attainment of a permanent home for children in a timely manner (items 8 and 9). A concern identified in regards to both items 8 and 9 was the impact of crowded court dockets.

With regard to the seven systemic factors, the CFSR determined that the State was in substantial conformity with statewide information system, quality assurance system, training, service array, agency responsiveness to the community, and foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention. The State was not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of case review system, primarily because of the findings that the State was not consistent in the development of case plans or in the involvement of parents in the case planning process, and that permanency hearings were not always being held in a timely manner. Findings of the CFSR indicate that court rules do not always coincide with State law regarding ASFA requirements, and consequently, permanency hearings are not routinely held in a timely manner.

Child welfare services in the State of Ohio are delivered in a state-supervised, county-administered environment. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) is the designated state agency responsible for overseeing the operation of 88 public children services agencies (PCSAs), which provide direct services to children and families. The PCSAs are created by Ohio statute and the structure of each is determined by the local governing body or county board of commissioners. Fifty-five PCSAs are located within the administrative body of the county departments of job and family services and 33 are separate children services boards. A county department of job and family services provides public assistance services, and can also administer child welfare services, child support services, adult services, and work force investment services (these counties can be termed *double combined* [20 counties],

triple combined [31 counties], or *quadruple combined* [four counties]). The children services board only provides child welfare services. With 88 counties, courts, and funding sources, each community is faced with a diverse array of strengths and challenges in the delivery of services. Additionally, there are 43 county or multi-county mental health and alcohol and drug addiction services boards and 7 counties with separate mental health boards and alcohol and drug addiction service boards.

The following is a summary of the CFSR findings regarding specific outcomes and systemic factors.

KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO OUTCOMES

I. SAFETY

Outcome S1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.

Status of Safety Outcome S1 – Not in Substantial Conformity

Ohio did not achieve substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. This determination was based on the finding that 84.4 percent of the cases reviewed were rated as having substantially achieved this outcome, which is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of substantial conformity. In addition, the State did not meet the national standard for either repeat maltreatment or maltreatment of children in foster care. A summary of the findings for specific items assessed under this outcome is presented below.

Item 1. Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment

Item 1 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement based on the finding that in 17 percent of the applicable cases, the agency did not respond to a maltreatment report in a timely manner. However, responses that were not timely were found only for reports classified as “non-emergencies.”

Item 2. Repeat maltreatment

Item 2 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. Although there was no recurrence of maltreatment in 89 percent of the cases, data from the State Data Profile indicate that the State’s incidence of repeat maltreatment for 2000 was 8.59 percent, which does not meet the national standard of 6.1 percent. Because the two measures are computed in different ways, it is necessary for both measures to meet specified criteria for an overall rating of Strength to be assigned to the item.

Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

Status of Safety Outcome S2 – Not in Substantial Conformity

Ohio did not achieve substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was substantially achieved in 83 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of substantial conformity. Although the two items assessed for this outcome were rated as a Strength individually, the number of cases in which both items were rated as a Strength was not sufficient to meet the 90 percent requirement for substantial conformity.

Item 3. Services to family to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal

Item 3 was assigned an overall rating of Strength because in 89 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to provide services to prevent children's placement in foster care while ensuring their safety in their homes. This determination is consistent with information provided in the Statewide Assessment regarding the development of safety plans for each child, followed by a comprehensive risk assessment.

Item 4. Risk of harm to child

Item 4 was assigned an overall rating of Strength because in 85 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that ODJFS was consistently effective in its efforts to reduce risk of harm to children. Case reviews indicate that in most cases, the agency effectively manages risk by removing children from their homes or by providing services while children remain in their homes. In the few cases in which reviewers determined that risk was not effectively managed, however, there was a significant lack of attention on the part of caseworkers to the potential for harm to the children.

II. PERMANENCY

Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

Status of Permanency Outcome 1 – Not in Substantial Conformity

Ohio did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. This determination was based on the finding that 73.1 percent of the cases were rated as having substantially achieved Permanency Outcome 1, which is less than the 90 percent required for an overall rating of substantial conformity. In addition, the State did not meet the national standard for foster care re-entries, stability of foster placements, reunifications occurring within 12 months of entry into foster care, or adoptions occurring within 24 months of entry into foster care. Stakeholders suggested that barriers to setting and achieving permanency goals have arisen due to differences between the agency and the court.

Although Ohio did not achieve substantial conformity for this outcome, some areas of strength were identified in the CFSR process. For example, case reviewers determined that for most cases, permanency goals were appropriate and established in a timely fashion. However, concerns were identified with respect to the lack of consistency in providing supportive services to children and families at the time of reunification and the use of long-term foster care leading to emancipation as a case goal.

Item 5. Foster care re-entries

Item 5 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement because, although there was a re-entry into foster care in only one of nine cases for which this assessment was applicable, the data reported in the State Data Profile indicate that the rate of re-entry into foster care within 12 months is 13.7 percent, which does not meet the national standard of 8.6 percent.

Item 6. Stability of foster care placement

Item 6 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement because, although in 89 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers rated placement stability as a Strength, the State Data Profile indicated that 85.9 percent of all children in foster care for 12 months or less had no more than two placement settings, which does not meet the national standard of 86.9 percent. A key concern identified in the case review process pertained to a lack of appropriate placements for children with behavior problems. In general, the Statewide Assessment attributes many of the placement changes captured in the data to the practice of placing children on an emergency basis, usually in shelters, at the point of entry into the system and prior to making a more long-term placement decision.

Item 7. Permanency goal for child

Item 7 was assigned an overall rating of Strength based on the finding that in 92 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had established an appropriate goal for the child in a timely manner. However, although case reviews generally found strong efforts at permanency planning, there was little evidence of concurrent planning approaches or practices.

Item 8. Reunification, Guardianship or Permanent Placement with Relatives

This item was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. Although reviewers rated this item as a Strength in 92 percent of the cases reviewed, the State did not meet the national standard for reunifications occurring within 12 months of entry into foster care. The Statewide Assessment posits that this finding may be due to a failure on the part of the agency to enter data on discharge reason into the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS). However, information in the Statewide Assessment supports statements made by stakeholders regarding the scarcity of mental health and drug and alcohol services in many counties and the negative impact of the lack of these services on the agency's ability to reunify families in a timely manner. Stakeholders mentioned that lack of access to services, waiting lists for services, and crowded court dockets were key barriers to timely reunifications.

Item 9. Adoption

Item 9 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement because reviewers determined that ODJFS had not made diligent efforts to achieve adoptions in a timely manner in 50 percent of the applicable cases. In addition, the State did not meet the national standard for percentage of finalized adoptions within 24 months of removal from home. The Statewide Assessment notes that adoption delays may be attributed to a variety of causes including the difficulty in finding adoptive families for children with “significant problems.” Other identified causes of delay were appeals of TPR petitions and the size of the court dockets.

Item 10. Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement

Item 10 was assigned an overall rating of Strength because in all applicable cases, reviewers determined that caseworkers were making diligent efforts to assist children in attaining the goal. However, stakeholders expressed some concerns that the goal of long term foster care leading to emancipation is inappropriate in some cases.

Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.

Status of Permanency Outcome 2 – Not in Substantial Conformity

Ohio did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was rated as substantially achieved in 84.6 percent of the cases, which is less than the 90 percent required for substantial conformity.

Although the State did not reach substantial conformity, there were many areas of strength with respect to this outcome. For example, the case review process revealed that the agency is highly effective in placing children in their home counties and communities and with their siblings, promoting visitation with parents and siblings, and supporting the relationship between children in foster care and their parents. Preserving connections for children in foster care was found to be more of a challenge for the agency, particularly with regard to keeping children connected to extended families when available placements were outside of their home communities. Also, the agency was not consistent in its efforts to seek relatives as placement resources.

Item 11. Proximity of foster care placement

Item 11 was assigned an overall rating of Strength because, in 95 percent of applicable cases, children were placed in close proximity to parents or close relatives or placement in another community was justified based on the child’s needs. Information from the Statewide Assessment and the stakeholder interviews suggest that the Family to Family initiative implemented in the State is at least partially responsible for the agency’s performance on this item. The Statewide Assessment describes the Family to Family initiative as a family-centered, neighborhood-based approach to working with children, families, and communities. It is based on the premise that neighborhoods are the primary source of support for families and, therefore, are in the best position for assuring the safety and vitality of their members.

Item 12. Placement with siblings

Item 12 was assigned an overall rating of Strength based on the finding that in 93 percent of the cases, siblings were either placed together or the separation was deemed necessary to meet the needs of one or more of the children.

Item 13. Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care

Item 13 was assigned an overall rating of Strength because in 90 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that ODJFS had made, or was making, concerted efforts to facilitate visitation. In most cases, visitation occurred at least once a month with parents and siblings in foster care.

Item 14. Preserving connections

Item 14 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement because in 27 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency was not making diligent efforts to maintain children's connections to family, community, faith, and friends while the children are in foster care.

Item 15. Relative placement

Item 15 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement because reviewers determined that, in 16 percent of the cases, the agency had not made diligent efforts to locate and assess relatives as potential placement resources. A primary problem identified was that workers were not fully exploring paternal relatives as placement options. To support relative placements, the State has created the Kinship Care Services Planning Council to develop recommendations specifying the types of services that should be included as part of a Statewide program of supportive services to kinship caregivers.

Item 16. Relationship of child in care with parents

Item 16 was assigned an overall rating of Strength because reviewers determined that in 95 percent of applicable cases, the agency supported the parent-child relationships of children in foster care.

III. WELL-BEING

Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

Status of Well-Being Outcome 1 – Not in Substantial Conformity

Ohio did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was rated as substantially achieved for only 66.0 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 90 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity.

A general finding of the CFSR process was that ODJFS is not consistent in its efforts to ensure that families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs. For example, caseworkers did not consistently meet policy requirements for the conduct of visits with parents or guardians. In addition, the service needs of children, parents, and foster parents were not thoroughly assessed and/or services were not provided in 32 percent of the cases. Finally, the agency was not consistent in involving parents and children in the case planning process.

Item 17. Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents

Item 17 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement because in 32 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that ODJFS had not been effective in assessing service needs and/or providing appropriate services to children, parents, and/or foster parents. Specific problems identified in the case review process were unmet service needs, incomplete assessments, and lack of attention to fathers' service needs. Case reviewers noted that a key problem was that assessments were not sufficiently in-depth to uncover potential underlying problems, such as domestic violence or substance abuse. Information from stakeholders and the Statewide Assessment suggests that a key barrier to meeting service needs is a lack of comprehensive services in the State.

Item 18. Child and family involvement in case planning

Item 18 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement based on the finding that in 30 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that ODJFS had not involved parents or children in the case planning process when it was appropriate to do so. According to the Statewide Assessment, it has been anecdotally reported by parents and foster parents in the State that they are not involved in developing the case plan and that case planning, for the most part, is a cookie-cutter approach. The Statewide Assessment indicated that parents have reported that they are afraid to use the court process to dispute the contents of the case plan, that their public defender is unhelpful, and that the agency is unresponsive to their input.

Item 19. Worker visits with child

Item 19 was assigned an overall rating of Strength based on the finding that in 90 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that caseworker visits with children were of sufficient frequency and quality. In most instances, visitation met or exceeded State policy, which requires face-to-face contacts with the child at least once a month. For children in foster care, agency policy requires more frequent contact during the first month in placement.

Item 20. Worker visits with parents

This item was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement because in 34 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that visits with parents were not sufficiently frequent or of sufficient quality to promote the safety and well-being of the children or enhance attainment of permanency. However, in many cases worker contact with parents exceeded State requirements. According to the Statewide Assessment, Ohio guidelines for visitation between the case worker and the parents, as of December 2001, require that caseworkers establish face-to-face contact with parents in both foster care and in-home services cases on a monthly basis and that visits involve monitoring of case plan objectives.

Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.

Status of Well-Being Outcome WB2 – Not in Substantial Conformity

Ohio did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2 based on the finding that 83.8 percent of the cases reviewed were found to have substantially achieved this outcome, which is less than the 90 percent required for substantial conformity. The general finding of the CFSR process was that the agency was not consistent in assessing children's educational needs and providing appropriate services to meet those needs.

Item 21. Educational needs of the child.

Item 21 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement because reviewers determined that in 16 percent of the cases, the educational needs of children were not adequately addressed. The key problem identified pertained to cases in which children showed evidence of school-related behavioral problems, developmental delays, learning disabilities, and/or poor school performance yet no assessment of needs was completed and services were not provided.

Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

Status of Well-Being Outcome 3 - Not in Substantial Conformity

Ohio did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. This determination was based on the finding that the outcome was rated as substantially achieved in only 69.8 percent of the applicable cases, which is less than the 90 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity.

In general, the CFSR process found that ODJFS was not consistently effective in meeting children's physical or mental health needs, although in most cases, these needs were adequately addressed. The key problems identified with respect to physical health services were that health screening and services were delayed for some children, and some children were not receiving preventive care or services to meet identified health needs. The key problems identified with regard to mental health services were that (1) children had

mental health needs that were not addressed, (2) mental health services were delayed (due primarily to a lack of availability of services); and/or (3) services were not provided with sufficient frequency to effectively meet the child's needs.

Item 22. Physical health of the child

Item 22 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement based on the finding that in 17 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that ODJFS was not adequately addressing the health needs of children in foster care and in-home services cases. Overall, reviewers found that assessments were completed in a timely manner, that medical records were in children's case files, and that medical records were being provided to foster parents at the time of placement. The key problem identified was that the assessment of children's health needs was not adequate in a number of cases.

Item 23. Mental health of the child

Item 23 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement because in 32 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that ODJFS was not meeting children's mental health needs. This determination is consistent with stakeholders' perceptions that there are problems in obtaining adequate mental health services for children. The determination is not consistent with Statewide Assessment information pertaining to mental health services for children in foster care. According to this information, when a child enters substitute care, part of the comprehensive Healthcheck screening includes a psychological assessment of the child. However, evidence of this practice was not consistently found among the foster care cases reviewed for the CFSR.

KEY FINDINGS RELATING TO SYSTEMIC FACTORS

IV. STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

Status of Statewide Information System – Substantial Conformity

Ohio is in substantial conformity with the factor of Statewide Information System.

Item 24. The State is operating a Statewide information system that, at a minimum, can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care.

Item 24 was rated as a Strength because the Family and Children Services Information System (FACSIS) meets the requirement that, at a minimum, the state can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care.

V. CASE REVIEW SYSTEM

Status of Case Review System – Not in Substantial Conformity

Ohio is not in substantial conformity with the factor of Case Review System.

Item 25. Provides a process that ensures that each child has a written case plan to be developed jointly with the child's parent(s) that includes the required provisions.

Item 25 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although State Code and Rule require that all children in foster care have a written case plan completed within a maximum allowable time of 60 days, State data for the past three years show that the number of children who had a case plan completed within that time was 86 percent. Also, despite the implementation of family case conferences in many public children services agencies (PCSAs), parents and foster parents reported that they are not involved in case planning and that case planning is, for the most part, pro forma.

Item 26. Provides a process for the periodic review of the status of each child, no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review.

This item was rated as a Strength because State Code and Rule require a semi-annual review (SAR) for each child in foster care. Stakeholders commented that the required periodic reviews are generally held in a timely manner, but suggested that the local court structure has an impact on the timeliness of reviews.

Item 27. Provides a process that ensures that each child in foster care under the supervision of the State has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter.

This item was assigned a rating of Area Needing Improvement because court rules do not always coincide with State law regarding the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) requirements, and consequently, permanency hearings are not routinely held in a timely manner.

Item 28. Provides a process for termination of parental rights proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act.

Item 28 was rated as a Strength because the State has a process for the termination of parental rights (TPR) proceedings in accordance with the provisions of ASFA. Stakeholders noted that the 12-month State requirement for filing for TPR exceeds the ASFA requirement of 15 months. However, some stakeholders also noted that although TPR petitions are filed within required timeframes, the hearings often are delayed because of the defense attorneys' requests for continuances.

Item 29. Provides a process for foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care to be notified of, and have an opportunity to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child.

Item 29 is rated as a Strength because Ohio provides a process for foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care to be notified, and have an opportunity to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child.

VI. QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

Status of Quality Assurance System-Substantial Conformity

Ohio is in substantial conformity with the factor of Quality Assurance System. Findings relevant to the specific items assessed for this factor are presented below.

Item 30. The State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of the children.

Item 30 was rated as a Strength because the rules of the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) set standards to ensure that children in foster care placements are provided quality services that protect their health and safety. The rules address the assessment of risk to the child, provision of services, training of staff, and overall agency operations. All OAC rules must be reviewed every 5 years.

Item 31. The State is operating an identifiable quality assurance system that is in place in the jurisdictions where the services included in the CFSP are provided, evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluates program improvement measures implemented.

Item 31 was rated as a Strength because the Child Protection Oversight and Evaluation (CPOE) Quality Assurance System evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluates program improvement measures implemented.

VII. TRAINING

Status of Training-Substantial Conformity

Ohio is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Training. Findings relevant to the specific items assessed for this factor are presented below.

Item 32. The State is operating a staff development and training program that supports the goals and objectives in the CFSP, addresses services provided under titles IV-B and IV-E, and provides initial training for all staff who deliver these services.

Item 32 was assigned an overall rating of Strength because the State has a specified competency-based curriculum focusing on core job requirements for new staff. The training is provided at regional training sites statewide to maintain consistency and quality. The State also maintains an automated tracking system that can readily identify all staff who have and have not attended specific training modules. There is an ongoing evaluation component of the training at multiple levels to assess appropriateness and effectiveness of the initial training provided.

Item 33. The State provides for ongoing training for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP.

Item 33 was rated as a Strength because there are specific Statewide ongoing training requirements for both caseworkers and supervisors that allow for individualization of training needs based on job responsibilities and employee knowledge, skills and experience.

Item 34. The State provides training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of State licensed or approved facilities that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children.

Item 34 was rated as a Strength because training is required by State rules and is made available by local agencies for both foster and adoptive parents. ODJFS monitors compliance with training requirements during on-site review of local agency records.

VIII. SERVICE ARRAY

Status of Service Array-Substantial Conformity

Ohio is in substantial conformity with the factor of Service Array. Findings relevant to the specific items assessed for this factor are presented below.

Item 35. The State has in place an array of services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency.

Item 35 was rated as a Strength because the State offers a wide array of services to meet the needs of children and families.

Item 36. The services in item 35 are accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions covered in the State's CFSP.

Item 36 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement because the ability to deliver needed services to children and families is negatively affected by unstable and disparate funding from county to county, and extreme variation in the availability of services such as mental health and substance abuse treatment.

Item 37. The services in item 35 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency.

Item 37 is rated as a Strength because through means such as the analysis of individual county needs and the flexibility allowed by ProtectOHIO, services can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency.

IX. AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY

Status of Agency Responsiveness To The Community-Substantial Conformity

Ohio is in substantial conformity with the factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. Findings relevant to the specific items assessed for this outcome are presented below.

Item 38. In implementing the provisions of the CFSP, the State engages in ongoing consultation with tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals and objectives of the CFSP.

Item 38 was rated as a Strength because ODJFS, in developing the CFSP, engages in extensive consultation with consumers, service providers, foster care providers, courts, and other public and private service agencies. Input from these sources is given careful consideration in the planning process.

Item 39. The agency develops, in consultation with these representatives, annual reports of progress and services delivered pursuant to the CFSP.

Item 39 is rated as a Strength because the annual progress and services report that ODJFS prepares to document compliance with the provisions of CFSP is written after consultation with the representatives noted under item 38.

Item 40. The State's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other Federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population.

Item 40 is rated as a Strength because of the effort ODJFS makes to assure that the services and benefits of different Federal programs that serve the same population are coordinated to provide the maximum benefit.

X. FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT LICENSING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION

Status of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention-Substantial Conformity

Ohio is in substantial conformity with the factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. Findings relevant to the specific items assessed for this outcome are presented below.

Item 41. The State has implemented standards for foster family homes and childcare institutions, which are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards.

Item 41 is rated as a Strength because the licensing standards as contained in the Ohio Administrative Code are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards.

Item 42. The standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds.

Item 42 is rated as a Strength because the licensing standards are applied uniformly statewide to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions that receive title IV-E or IV-B funds.

Item 43. The State complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children.

Item 43 was rated as a Strength because the State complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children.

Item 44. The State has in place a process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed.

Item 44 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although Ohio has proper policies and procedures in place and has programs and initiatives to recruit potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of the children for whom homes are needed, there are still not enough homes for those children.

Item 45. The State has in place a process for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children.

Item 45 is rated as a Strength because the cross-jurisdictional resources that Ohio uses are effective in facilitating timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children.

Introduction

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the State of Ohio. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment prepared by the State child welfare agency – the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), Office for Children and Families;
- The State Data Profile prepared by the Children’s Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services;
- Reviews of 50 cases at three sites throughout the State; and
- Interviews or focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State-level) with stakeholders including children, parents, foster parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, school personnel, service providers, court personnel, legislators, and attorneys.

The key characteristics of the 50 cases reviewed are the following:

- 23 cases were reviewed in Franklin County, 15 in Clark County, and 12 in Washington County.
- All 50 cases had been open cases at some time during the period under review.
- 26 of the cases were “foster care cases” (cases in which children were in the care and custody of the State child welfare agency and in an out-of-home placement at some time during the period under review), and 24 were “in-home services cases” (cases in which families received services from the child welfare agency while children remained in their homes).
- In 31 of the cases, all children in the family were Caucasian; in 13 cases, all children in the family were African American; in 2 cases, all children in the family were Native American; and in 3 cases, the children in the family were two or more races. In one case, reviewers did not identify the race/ethnicity of the children.
- Of the 50 cases reviewed, the **primary** reason for the opening of a child welfare agency case was the following:
 - Neglect (not including medical neglect) – 17 cases (34%)
 - Physical abuse – 10 cases (20%)
 - Sexual abuse – 9 cases (18%)
 - Emotional maltreatment – 3 cases (6%)
 - Substance abuse by parent – 2 cases (4%)
 - Child’s behavior – 2 cases (4%)
 - Child in juvenile justice system – 1 case (2%)
 - Medical neglect – 1 case (2%)
 - Domestic violence in child’s home – 1 case (2%)
 - Mental/physical health of parent – 1 case (2%)
 - Other – 3 cases (6%)

- Among **all** reasons identified for children coming to the attention of the child welfare agency, neglect (not including medical neglect) was cited in 29 cases (58%), physical abuse was cited in 21 cases (42%), sexual abuse was cited in 18 cases (36%), emotional maltreatment was cited in 12 cases (24%), substance abuse by parents was cited in 11 cases (22%), and child's behavior was cited in 11 cases (22%).
- For 15 (58%) of the 26 foster care cases, the children entered foster care prior to the period under review and remained in foster care during the entire period under review.

The first section of the report presents the CFSR findings relevant to the State's performance in achieving specific outcomes for children in the areas of safety, permanency, and well-being. For each outcome, there is a table providing the degree of outcome achievement by site, a presentation of the State's status with regard to substantial conformity with the outcome, and a discussion of each item examined as part of the overall outcome assessment. The second section of the report provides an assessment and discussion of the systemic factors relevant to the child welfare agency's ability to achieve positive outcomes for children.